

March 18, 2018: Nav Samvatsar & Arya Samāj Sthaapna Divas

AN ARYA LIVES TO INCREASE THE HAPPINESS INDEX



By Acharya Bramdeo

Q: What is the Arya Samāj?

A: Arya Samāj consists of two words: Arya, that is noble, and (ii) Samāj refers to an association of people. Arya Samāj is therefore 'the association of Aryas or noble persons'.

Q: How does one become an Arya?

A: The nobility of an Arya is pedigree or lineage-based, and thus not acquired by the status of one's parents at birth. To be more precise, a person is an Arya on the basis of his character (*guna*), actions (*karma*) and innate temperament (*svabhaava*).

Q: Is there any other requirement to be an Arya?

A: Yes. An Arya never lives in a make-up situation. He is identified by the perfect harmony between thoughts (*manasaa*), words (*vaachaa*) and deeds (*karmanaa*). This unity leads to purity and purity leads to spirituality.

Q: What is the basis of such conviction?

The shloka from Chaanakya Neeti is self-explanatory:

Manasyekama vachasyekama, karmanyekama mahaatmanaam |
Manasyanyata vachasyanyata, karmanyanyata duraatmanaama ||

Men of evil mind have one thing in the mind, another thing in their speech and something else in their actions.

Men of great mind have the same thing in their thoughts, words and deeds, meaning what they think they talk about and what they talk about they translate into actions.

Q: It contradicts the saying 'Unity in diversity'!

Ever heard of someone who has one thing in the mind, another thing in his speech and something else in his actions getting some good/sound sleep at night? No. The basics of the bonds for unity lies in the adoption of the Universal Vedic Values, which cuts across cultures, creed/ faith/beliefs/religions, and even the atheist who does not believe in God but upholds living values and the laws of nature. Then we have to concede that cult practice diverge across people, communities, etc. That is the realisation of 'Unity In Diversity' ...not the lip service that are echoed in various quarters.

Q: Indeed, a dream in today's world!

A: No. Personality, nurtured within the framework of Dharma (virtue) leads to noble, virtuous and humane qualities which embellish the human character. Such a

person is an Arya, but this word is, more-than-often, misunderstood and given a narrow meaning – associated to a religion, race, society, creed, community ...etc. Those who have studied chemistry will recall that a diamond is carbon, the changes resulting from intense underground pressure. And the most lustrous sparkling diamond is but a rough stone that has undergone attentive cutting and polishing processes.

Q: *What are is state of mind of an Arya?*

An Arya is a citizen of the world who upholds the concept of the global village: *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, i.e. the world is but one family, transcending the geographical and other man-made barriers.

Q: *But the general view is that the Arya Samāj a sect or religious group.*

A: The Arya Samāj is neither a sect nor an exclusive religious group.

The 6th principle of the Arya Samāj clearly defines its mission and vision as: ‘*The prime object of this society is to do good to the whole world, that is to uplift the physical, moral and spiritual standards of all.*’ The words are crystal clear: a universal goal.

The founder of the Arya Samāj, Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati himself stated in unequivocal terms: “*I have not come to preach any new dogma or religion, nor to establish a new religious order, nor to be proclaimed a new messiah or Pontiff. I have only brought before my people the light of Vedic Wisdom...*”

Q: *Why the Arya Samāj?*

A The political, economic and social conditions prevailing in the nineteenth century presented to a dismal picture of a society: illiteracy, ignorance proliferated; orthodox / irrational thoughts, beliefs and rituals totally eclipsed the essence of dharma; widespread social evils, prejudice and partiality (creed, caste, colour, religion, gender bias, etc.) had eroded the human aspects of life; centuries of foreign domination had diluted the valour of the Vedic way of life and Aaryavarta, reduced to shambles.

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samāj as a reform and renaissance movement in all fields of life, a total revolution against all the above malpractices and to bring forth truth as known by the senses, reason and revelation; indeed a much-needed lifeline for the disintegrated and factional ridden society.

Q: *What is the contribution of the Arya Samāj to humanity?*

A: The Arya Samāj re-affirmed the authority of the Vedas as the first revelation and scripture of humanity. Promoting the Universal Vedic values, it has triggered many universal concepts across international organisations, not-so-modern as they may seem, as they are derived from the Vedas ...a seminal form of knowledge from where all true knowledge has been, is still being and will continue to be expounded:

- » Compulsory education for all;
- » Respect for parents, teachers, benefactors;
- » Women’s rights, Children’s rights, Human Rights, etc., imbued with the concept of ‘Rights with Responsibilities’;
- » Good governance & Ethical dealings at all times;
- » Equal opportunities where meritocracy is based solely on competences, and there is no exploitation of man by man;

- » Globalisation not limited to trade and economics but to promote universal welfare;
- » Self-rule, self-determination is better than foreign dominance in spite of whatever facilities they may provide.

Q: *What underlines the principles of the Arya Samāj?*

A: In a nutshell, the 1st and 2nd principles pertain to the duty of man towards the Supreme Being; the 3rd, 4th and 5th focus upon the duty of man towards himself; and the 6th to 10th point out the duty of man as a social being.

They are eternal with universal appeal and acceptability. It points to virtuous living where dharma sharpens the discriminative power of one's intellect towards truth, good behaviour and calls upon one and all to be righteousness/dutiful in life.

Q: *Why so much emphasis on ethics?*

A: The absence of ethics is the root of evils. Ethics, throughout all dealings, will ensure social progress and a society free from unlimited desires where all endeavours have a common denominator: the continuous uplift of physical, spiritual and social standards of all.

Gross Domestic Product Vs Gross Happiness Index

Today's turmoil hitting people, societies, nations and the world is due to the fact that progress is measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is calculated on consumption, leading over consumption and depletion of world resources. The Vedas advocate progress in terms of increase in the physical, spiritual and social welfare, a unique approach which the world is reckoning as the Gross Happiness Index.

Each and every one need be ever aware that our universe has sufficient resources to fulfil the needs of all NOT the greed of a few!

In fact, Sage Manu's ten tenets of Dharma and Sage Patanjali's Yama – Niyama form a universal code of ethics that should be integrated in teaching curriculum at all levels.

Q: *How do we gauge the success rate?*

A: The benchmark to measure the success rate in achieving its objectives is the sum total of the individual efforts of each and every one to live up to the universal ideals of the Vedas, summed up in the 10 principles of the Arya Samāj.

Pointing one finger at the other person equals to three fingers pointing towards our own self! Rather than wasting time in futile arguments, we should strive to align our thoughts, speech and deeds with the universal living values.

The world will be transformed only by the transformation of each and every single person as the individual is the smallest unit of society: the individual as a role model for his family and friends; the family as a role model for the community, village, town; the town as a role model for the country; and the country as a role model for the world.

Q: *What is the universal source of inspiration?*

A: The prayer part of the Gaayatree mantra also known as Saavitree mantra or Mahaamantra, *Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat* where we pray to the Lord to enlighten our intellect towards virtuous thoughts and actions. If we manage to tame down our thoughts and emotions, we shall realise the inner voice guiding us and that elevated our mind to *medhaa buddhi* or discriminating intellect, that is-empowerment to distinguish between *Satya-Asatya* (truth Vs what is not true),

Dharma-Adharma (virtue Vs vice, immorality...) and *Kartavya-Akartavya* (duties and responsibilities Vs negligence, deceit, duplicity...).

Dharma as the fundamentals underlying our thoughts, speech and physical actions will lead us to higher levels of happiness in the present life and beyond. We become the makers of our destiny, next births till we reach the final goal, moksha or the eternal bliss.

Q: *Walking towards that increased level of happiness seems more like a maze or an entangled web.*

A: The Vedas, the source of all true knowledge is filled with life sciences, social sciences, etc., no literature, history or biography. The 6th principle of the Arya Samaj is a 'vision and mission statement', a term which modern management has coined only in the late 1980's. Likewise an in-depth analysis reveals that the repackaging the Vedic knowledge by gurus. For example – the key to success in any field is defined by Sage Patanjali in the Yoga sutras:

sa-tu-dirgha-kaala-nairantar-satkaar-asevito-dridha-bhumi (YD 1.14)

Success is definitely be achieved when practice becomes firmly rooted o stable and firm foundations through a sound, continuous/consistent practice over an extended period of time, carried out with sincere devotion, passion and, in a serious and thoughtful manner.

Any race or marathon starts with the first step. Let's take the first step.

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